

On June 15, 2020, after an extensive effort to engage Ross Township residents to provide input on the extent of the impact of the burgeoning deer population in Ross Township [<http://www.ross.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/1140/Deer-Management-Final-Draft-Version?bidId=>], the Board of Commissioners officially engaged Suburban Whitetail Management LLC (SWM) to design and manage a controlled archery hunt of deer on Township property, and private property with the consent of the owner(s). Hunting in Township parks will not be permitted. Hunting will be strictly regulated by the bylaws of SWM, the Pennsylvania Game and Wildlife Code, and Title 58 Section 131 of the Pennsylvania Code.

On April 7, 2020, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners approved the 2020-2021 deer archery **hunting season** that must be followed in **Ross Township: Sept. 19-Nov. 14; Sunday, Nov. 15; Nov. 16-Dec. 5; Dec. 7-12; and Dec. 26-Jan. 23, 2021. Firearms deer hunting season is Nov. 28-Dec. 5 and Dec. 7-Dec. 12, and archery hunting will only be permitted on Township and private properties under agreement with SWM on these firearms hunting dates. All archery hunters shall wear a minimum of 250 square inches of blaze orange during these dates.**

Ample empirical and anecdotal evidence was gathered by the Township to support the need to control the deer population, which has been destroying plantings, shrubs, and grass throughout the Township. Of greater concern has been the increased risk of deer-vehicle collisions, Lyme disease through ticks on deer, and the threat of chronic wasting disease among the deer population.

Archery hunting is universally considered to be one of the safest and most effective means to control a deer population in a suburban area like Ross Township.

<http://congressionalsportsmen.org/policies/state/white-tailed-deer-management>

<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/White-tailedDeer/Documents/Guide%20to%20Community%20Deer%20Management.pdf>

Important highlights of the managed archery hunt are as follows:

- The hunt is for whitetail deer only in the open archery hunt season
- Every hunter will donate their 1st and every 3rd deer harvested to a program called Hunters Sharing the Harvest. This program provides quality protein to food banks
<https://sharedeer.org/about/>
- Safety is a top priority of SWM for both residents and hunters. Hunters must follow all Pennsylvania game laws
<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Pages/HuntingandTrappingDigest.aspx>
- The deer management program will require time and patience to be successful. The deer population will decrease annually, but a significant decrease of the population to a healthy and sustainable level will not occur for several years
- Many of the archery hunters are residents of Ross Township
- This program is not new. It has been conducted in the Borough of Franklin Park for four (4) years
- Please feel free to approach any archery hunter if you witness them walking into their assigned hunting area, or if they are parking their vehicle on the street or on the berm of a road as they are preparing to enter their assigned hunting area. This is likely the only time the hunter will be visible. Once they enter the assigned area and position themselves for hunting, they are usually not visible. SWM requires that all hunters be friendly and courteous

- Anyone witnessing anything believed to be a game law violation should report it to the Pennsylvania Game Commission:
<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Law/Pages?OperationGameThief.aspx>

SWM will be required to provide a list of all properties on which a hunter is permitted to hunt, and the names of the hunters assigned to these properties, to the Ross Township Director of Community Development, the Ross Township Chief of Police, and the Pennsylvania Game Warden.

Any questions or concerns about the hunters or the deer management program can be addressed to the individuals listed below. Any resident interested in offering their property for hunting, or any resident interested in participating as an archery hunter is strongly encouraged to contact Suburban Whitetail Management LLC.

- Suburban Whitetail Management LLC:
Luke Leonard – 412.390.6219 or suburbanwhitetailpa@gmail.com
Mike Clinebell – 412.860.4984 or suburbanwhitetailpa@gmail.com
- Ross Township Police Department:
Chief Joseph Ley – 412.931-9070 or jaley@rosspolice.com
- Pennsylvania Game Commission:
Game Warden Zeb Campbell – 724.238.9523 or zcampbell@pa.gov

Monthly reports on the number of deer harvested and any other pertinent information on the progress of the managed archery hunt will be provided by SWM to the Board of Commissioners and posted on the Township website.